

Meet United Way's Community Solutions volunteers

With the holiday season upon us, my mailboxes are filling up with opportunities to give to various causes, both locally and globally. With so many options, how can we be sure our dollars are having an impact and are being used in the most efficient and effective way to help the most people?

At United Way of Northwest Georgia, we have a team of committed volunteers who focus on just that — meeting the needs of our friends and neighbors in the most fiscally responsible way. Think about it like this: if an agency applies for and is awarded funding through the United Way Community Solutions process, this is the charitable equivalent of Good Housekeeping's seal of approval.

Meet United Way's Community Solutions volunteers. Bob Spahn of Shaw Industries chairs the 2017 committee. Bob has volunteered on this committee since 2005. He has seen how the economy locally has affected the needs in the community and how United Way's emphasis on making basic need services a priority helped people in our community get back on their feet.

With the funds raised during the annual campaign, we distribute the dollars effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of our community. We rely on our volunteers to determine the appropriate distribution of these funds to the quality programs provided by local agencies. The volunteers begin in March with an orientation. During the year, they visit local agency partners, study their requests for funding, and review the financial position of each partner before funding is recommended to United Way's Board of Directors in December. Volunteer participation allows our United Way to continue to lead the nonprofit sector in the call for transparent accountability and making a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

Caring for families and children

Your contribution helps our community create home and school environments where children and youth have opportunities to learn, be secure and prepare to be productive adults. The family services panel is chaired by Rachel Fisher of Shaw Industries. Her panel includes: Ruth Lee Hair, Suzie Hansen, Kevin Nolan, Lori Roberts, Veronica Rollins and Dean Stamper.

Youth services

This panel is chaired by Tommy Johnson of Engineered Floors. His panel includes: John Cowart, Jennifer Dean, James Dixon, Nathan

Donahue, James Gordy, Lisa Hackney, Tatum Hackney, Sandra Hewitt, Jim Keen, Phillip Seeley and Erika Vaassen.

Caring for our neighbors

Your contribution helps meet basic needs for food, clothing, safe shelter and emergency assistance.

The basic needs panel is chaired by Allison Oxford, NC GA Learning Resource

System. Her panel includes: Mike Brigman, Larry Morgan, Mark Rogers, Joanie Taylor, Wendy Tieck and Catherine Wiggins.

Counseling and advocacy

This panel is chaired by Bill Brueckner, Shaw Industries, who is also the committee vice-chair and

will become the chair in 2018. His panel includes: Tracy Corbin, Dennis Hart, David Hungerpiller, Jevin Jensen, Phenna Petty and Stephanie Seay.

Caring for the elderly and people with special needs

Your contribution helps the elderly remain independent and ensures dignity for those facing physical and mental limitations. David Wilkerson, Shaw Industries, chairs this panel and includes: Gene Autry, Steve Bartoo, Candi Hampton, Russell Headrick, Ron Johnson, Brett Smith, and Laura Smith.

Admissions and qualifications

Patrick Sain, Material Handling, is the former chair and oversees admissions and qualifications with the help of Randy Selby, Anita Thornton and Shanda Wein.

During the season of Thanksgiving, I give thanks for these dedicated volunteers and our United Way board members who exemplify servant leadership. If you know any of these wonderful people, please thank them for their commitment to improving lives and building a stronger community.

As you think about your holiday giving, please consider an investment that works 365 days a year in our local community. Together, we will make great things happen. Campaign Chairman Joe Young, Engineered Floors, has a goal of \$3.9 million and needs your help to get there. Learn more about Joe at bit.ly/joeyoung17 and how you can help improve lives and strengthen our community. Gifts can be made online at ourunited-way.org/give or checks can be mailed to P.O. Box 566, Dalton, GA 30722.

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